

## Observations on British Butterflies in 1975, Part 2

By Dr. C. J. LUCKENS\*

Several butterfly species were flying on a down near Stockbridge on July 1st. *Argynnis aglaia* L., which incidentally I had already seen in the Highlands as early as June 10th, was freshly out in sparse numbers; *Aphantopus hyperantus* L. and *Melanargia galathea* L. were emerging, and a few *Ochlodes venata* Br. and Grey. and *Aricia agestis* Schiff. were noted. Two or three bright *Parasemia plantaginis* L. also careered about in the intermittent sunshine.

I looked forward to the weekend when I intended to look, once again, for *Plebejus argus* f. *cretaceus* Tutt. in Kent. The weather changed disappointingly on July 5th when we travelled to Sussex, and the following day was so cold and dreary that I decided to cancel the journey to the North Downs and inspect instead a heathland colony of this species virtually on the door step. A few rather worn *argus* males were flushed out of the furze and heather of Chailey Common, and *Maniola jurtina* L. also flew fitfully and reluctantly in the damp and dull atmosphere.

The following week, on the 11th, there were long sunny spells in the morning after a showery night, and I drove to the woods south of Salisbury. *Apatura iris* L. was well out, and within half an hour of arrival I saw three males settled on the track and several more skimming about the oaks. At least one female was seen also, a large and fresh-looking specimen flying well up round a large willow. The flight lasted until about midday, and then sightings of this splendid butterfly became more sporadic. *Limentis camilla* L. and *Argynnis paphia* L. were also winging along the rides, with the latter engaging in the delightful rhythmic mating flight characteristic of the species.

Heavy rain fell again the next day, but by the following weekend the hot weather had returned and we visited Holmesly and Tantony Wood in the New Forest on the 18th. The paucity of butterflies in both these places was painfully evident and exactly five *camilla* and three *paphia* were seen during the afternoon. *Thymelicus sylvestris* L. was the only butterfly that could be said to be at all common.

July 19th was dull and cool at first, but sunny spells developed in the afternoon and in the Stockbridge area there were several *A. aglaia* dashing about over the rough downland. A newly deposited *aglaia* ovum was found on dog violet. *Maniola tithonus* L., *M. galathea* and worn *A. hyperanthus* were flying in numbers and I was interested to see several *Lysandra coridon* Poda. of both sexes already out. Two or three fresh *Cupido minimus* Fuessly. flitting about must have represented a second brood.

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I revisited on July 24th the Wiltshire wood where *A. iris* had been prevalent two weeks earlier. In the short time available several female *iris* were seen, including one ovipositing high up in a large willow, but only one male. A solitary *Celastrina argiolus* L. imbibed from the edge of a puddle and this was the only one of its kind I saw in 1975. In another section of the woods I was fortunate to net a large female *iris*, which, before she was released six days later, laid over 80 ova on a sleeved willow branch in our garden.

Mr. Andrew Creber accompanied me to the Wiltshire woods on July 25th, where we met Mr. C. D. Arthur of Bristol. With its usual unpredictability, *A. iris* was in a retiring mood, and we saw only two. *A. paphia* was very much in evidence again, including one *f. valesina*, and most of them seemed to be very much smaller than usual, possibly a reflection of the dry spring. Also noted were *A. aglaia*, *M. galathea*, *Lycaena phlaeas* L. and one *Thymelicus lineola* Ochs. flying with dozens of *T. sylvestris*.

Portland now seems to have gained a high reputation among *coridon* enthusiasts, and there were certainly excellent numbers of this butterfly there on July 26th. Some of the males had already started to lose their youthful looks, and I could find no variation of note. A few worn *P. argus* of rather a small form were still flying, and fair numbers of *Eumenis semele* L. skipped among the great slabs of stone beside the paths.

On August 1st, Mr. R. Craske and I surveyed the Winchester Downs for *coridon*, but though good numbers were still on the wing, once again no aberrations of note were found. It was a most beautiful day, however, and a great pleasure to see so many of these blues flying in rather more pleasing surroundings than the bleak wastes of Portland. However, a necessary journey to Dorchester the following week provided the opportunity to revisit that locality, and the afternoon of the 8th found me searching the sparse vegetation of the banks and disused quarries where *coridon* is so abundant. Most were in poor condition, unfortunately—a distinctive ab. *parallella* which I picked off a grass stem would probably have been quite a prize if it had been a week younger, but in its ragged condition was completely unacceptable for the cabinet. *M. galathea*, *E. semele* and *P. icarus* were also fairly common, there were a few *L. phlaeas* about, and even the occasional female *P. argus*, still flying but in the last stages of delapidation.

The downs near Stockbridge were the selected ground on August 13th, and here, as usual, plenty of *Hesperia comma* L. were buzzing about in the hot sun. The males had obviously been out for some time and the females also looked far from fresh. In company with this downland skipper were good numbers of *P. icarus* and *C. pamphilus*, and a moderate sprinkling of *L. coridon*, *M. jurtina* and *P. megera*.

Cold and wet weather struck after a further day of sunshine, and continued over the weekend when we were staying

in Sussex. Monday, August 18th, was fine during the morning and I drove to the downs west of Eastbourne to check on a site where *H. comma* flies—in fact the only locality I know where it still hangs on in Sussex. The habitat there appeared to me unchanged since 1973, when I had seen two or three *comma* and several *Lysandra bellargus* Rott. But on this occasion, in spite of extensive searching, I was very disappointed to find only one *bellargus* and no sign of the skipper at all. In 1970 both these butterflies had been flourishing in a modest way, and *Eumenis semele* L. was also fairly common. I have seen nothing of the Grayling there since 1971 (vide *Ent. Rec. Rec.*, Vol. 85, p. 87), and as this is a butterfly that is supposed to favour the shortest turf and barest sites on the chalk, as does *comma* to some extent, perhaps the down is changing imperceptibly to a less favourable longer grass sward. On the way back, near Lewes, I was cheered to find *L. bellargus* out in quite good numbers on one stretch of hillside. Heavy clouds blew up in the early afternoon, but did not prevent a fresh female *Vanessa cardui* L. partaking nectar from buddleias in my parents garden. It contained to imbibe even after the rain started to fall quite heavily.

Three days later we went for a short stay to Norfolk. The weather was sunny but cool, and my father was the only one to catch a glimpse of *Papilio machaon* L. This butterfly had apparently had rather a poor year according to the warden at Whiteslea, who was, though I had not met him previously, most helpful and knowledgeable. The lack of Swallowtails was to some degree compensated when we had a close and prolonged view of a male Marsh Harrier quartering some open ground near the reed beds.

An afternoon on the Winchester Downs on August 26th was most rewarding as a single male *bellargus* was seen flying in an area where it has not been officially recorded for at least ten years. However, I have heard more than one person mention that they saw *bellargus* here in 1974, but this was the first time I personally could record it with certainty. A little later on, while walking along a narrow path, I saw what I thought was a female *coridon* ab. *infra-semisyngrapha* sunning on a knapweed head. A second look when I was almost past revealed that it was in fact a fresh male, an ab. *melaina*. A hurried swipe with the net missed handsomely and I had to pursue the butterfly at top speed right down the steep slope, across the floor of the valley, and halfway up the other side before I found it once more. Several people walking their dogs obviously found the whole spectacle highly diverting.

The season virtually came to a close for me after the end of August. Hearing of *Colias croceus* L. in the West, I kept a close watch on the only large clover field I could find in this neighbourhood, but saw no sign of the lovely saffron-coloured migrant. Several late broods of *L. phlaeas* were bred out in my outside cages, and this species was about on the downs well into October. Once again I found Autumn *c-album*

most commonly in our own garden and only sparsely in the woods around Southampton. The last one I saw flew in the garden only a few days before the birth of our third son on October 18th.

A final expedition was on December 27th, when I found a dozen *Thecla quercus* ova on three oaks in a West Sussex locality. 1976 started with a similar project in Alice Holt—but 1976 is another season, and one that I, ever optimistic, believe to be full of entomological promise.

## Indian Cotton Jassid—*Amrasca biguttula biguttula* (Ishida)

By A. S. SOHI\*

Distant (1918) described *Empoasca devastans* collected from American cotton at Nagpur. Ghauri (1967) transferred it to the genus, *Amrasca* Ghauri as *Amrasca devastans* (Distant). However, Dworakowska (1970) described a new genus, *Sundapteryx* taking *Chlorita biguttula* Ishida, 1913 as its type species and synonymised *Empoasca devastans* Distant with it. She named it as *Sundapteryx biguttula biguttula* (Ishida). Later, Kapoor and Sohi (1972) renamed it as *Amrasca biguttula biguttula* (Ishida). But Chopra (1973) advocated that the name should be *Sundapteryx biguttula biguttula* (Ishida) since the genus *Sundapteryx* Dworakowska was not synonymised with *Amrasca* Ghauri by Kapoor and Sohi (1972). However, the genus *Amrasca* has priority over the *Sundapteryx* Dworakowska and the species *biguttula* Ishida over *devastans* Distant. This synonymy has also been realised by Dworakowska (Personal communication from Dr. Ghauri). So, the earlier proposed name *Amrasca biguttula biguttula* (Ishida) should be preferred.

### *Amrasca* Ghauri

*Amrasca* Ghauri, 1967, *Proc. R. ent. Soc. Lond. (B)*, **36** 11-12: 159-61. *Sundapteryx* Dworakowska, 1970, *Bull. Acad. pol. Sci. Cl. II. Ser. Sci. biol.*, **18** (11): 708-12. Syn. n.

### *Amrasca biguttula biguttula* (Ishida)

*Chlorita biguttula* Ishida, 1913: Dworakowska, 1970. *Bull. Acad. pol. Sci. Cl. II. Ser. Sci. biol.*, **18** (11): 708. *Empoasca devastans* Distant, 1918, *Fauna Br. India*, **7**: 93. *Amrasca devastans* (Distant) Ghauri, 1967. *Proc. R. ent. Soc. Lond. (B)*, **36** (11-12): 163. *Sundapteryx biguttula biguttula* (Ishida) Dworakowska, 1970. *Bull. Acad. pol. Sci. Cl. II. Ser. Sci. biol.*, **18** (11): 712. *Amrasca biguttula biguttula* (Ishida); Kapoor & Sohi, 1972, *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.*, **84**: 51.

This species was collected from Haryana, Jamu and Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan from a number of plant species, viz. American cotton, Bengal-gram, brinjal, carrot, castor, coriander, Deccan-hemp, indigenous cotton, Egyptian clover, drumstick-tree, garden-pea, grape-vine, guava, Indian cherry,

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